

be luxuries. Children should not be entitled to them because they happen to live in affluence; they are entitled to them because they live in America.

Let us look to this important anniversary for inspiration to desegregate American education for good and for all—to complete the work begun so bravely by the Little Rock Nine.

COURAGE AND BRUTALITY IN BURMA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for the past 10 days, people around the world have watched with admiration and increasing trepidation as over 100,000 courageous Burmese citizens, led by thousands of maroon clad Buddhist monks, have demonstrated peacefully in Burma's capital city in support of democracy and human rights. They have been calling for an end to military dictatorship and the release of Burma's rightful, democratically elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been either in prison or under house arrest for 11 of the past 18 years.

Today, there are reports that Burmese soldiers had cordoned off the streets, fired tear gas, shot and killed several of the protesters and a Japanese journalist, raided monasteries and arrested opposition party members and hundreds of monks. The vicious response by the Burmese military against masses of peaceful, dignified, unarmed citizens, while not surprising, is intolerable and should be universally condemned.

Earlier this week, President Bush made a forceful statement before the United Nations General Assembly criticizing the repression of Burma's military leaders and announcing tighter sanctions and visa restrictions. The President's announcement is welcome.

U.S. leadership is essential, but it can only go so far. Bringing democracy and human rights to the Burmese people will require far stronger pressure from its neighbors and trading partners such as China, Thailand, Russia, and India. It will require these and other nations to disavow the failed policies of engagement with the Burmese junta.

I have long believed that engagement is most often the best policy, but there comes a time when it has demonstrably failed, and there is no more obvious example of this than Burma. A different approach is long overdue.

Burma's friends and allies must make unequivocally clear what President Bush and others have said, and what the brave citizens of Burma are calling for: Burma will suffer severe economic sanctions unless Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners are released and the generals in charge agree to hand over power.

In his own speech at the United Nations, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon voiced hope that the Burmese junta would "exercise utmost restraint" and engage in a dialogue with "relevant parties" in seeking national reconciliation. Obviously, that has not hap-

pened. Since then, the Secretary General has sent his special envoy to Burma to try to convince the Burmese junta to resolve this crisis peacefully.

It is very disappointing that China, Burma's largest trading partner, has once again put its economic interests, and Burma's corrupt generals, above the fundamental rights of the Burmese people. China, which has more influence over the Burmese junta than any other government, blocked the U.N. Security Council from adopting a resolution condemning the violence.

It is a sad commentary on a country that the rest of the world entrusted to host the next Olympics. While China has urged the generals to exercise restraint, history has shown that in Burma words alone are not enough. We hoped China would act differently this time, but so far we have been mistaken.

Many times in the past, peaceful protests in Burma have been put down with brute force. Countless Burmese citizens have been imprisoned or killed for doing nothing more than speaking out in support of democracy.

The past 10 days of protests have attracted far greater crowds, and because of the Internet the whole world can see their numbers, their bravery, and the strength of their conviction. The people of Burma are an inspiration to people everywhere, and they are asking for our support. Without it they cannot succeed. If all nations stand united behind them now, Burma's long nightmare can finally come to an end.

CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. CONRAD. As the chairman knows, many rural hospitals are facing significant financial pressure and are finding it increasingly difficult to operate under the Medicare prospective payment system. In response, the chairman and I have worked closely to support our rural facilities and established the Critical Access Hospital Program in 1997. This program was designed to help small, rural facilities remain financially viable in the face of inadequate Medicare reimbursement, and it has been tremendously beneficial to maintaining access to hospital care across North Dakota and other rural states.

Mr. BAUCUS. I share my colleague's support for the Critical Access Hospital Program. Like North Dakota, Montana struggles to maintain sufficient access to hospital care. The Critical Access Hospital Program has been an important component in ensuring that our hospitals can remain open and continue to serve Medicare beneficiaries.

Mr. CONRAD. Despite the successes that have been achieved under the Critical Access Hospital Program, changes made as part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 have harmed the ability of certain critical hospitals, such as St. Joseph's Hospital in Dickinson, ND, to become critical access

hospitals. It is imperative that flexibility be reinstated in the program to allow States to deem hospitals as necessary providers and, therefore, eligible for critical access hospital status. I have spoken with you about this issue in the past and am pleased that you are willing to consider this issue during consideration of a Medicare package later in the year.

Mr. DORGAN. I strongly support reinstating the ability of States to deem necessary providers to be critical access hospitals. The Critical Access Hospital Program has helped ensure that the doors stay open at many hospitals in rural America. Without this program, many Medicare beneficiaries in my State would have to drive hours to receive health care. I think it is important to give States flexibility to deem necessary providers as critical access hospitals and not rely on a one-size-fits-all definition. If we don't address this issue, I am worried that one of our hospitals in western North Dakota, St. Joseph's Hospital, may not be able to survive. I appreciate Chairman BAUCUS' commitment to work with us to address this issue and to consider modifications to the Critical Access Hospital Program that would allow St. Joseph's Hospital in Dickinson, ND, to participate.

Mr. BAUCUS. I applaud my colleague's efforts on this issue and assure you that I am committed to working with you to enact modifications and improvements to the Critical Access Hospital Program in Medicare legislation later this year that will assist hospitals like St. Joseph's.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank my colleague for his commitment and look forward to working with you to craft a reasonable solution that benefits St. Joseph's.

NATIONAL LEARN AND SERVE CHALLENGE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this week marks the first-ever nationwide Learn and Serve Challenge, a series of events occurring across the country to raise awareness about the value of service learning and the role of Learn and Serve America in supporting and promoting it.

Service learning is a way for schools, colleges, and communities to combine community service and academic learning in ways that increase student learning, strengthen partnerships between schools and the communities they serve, and perhaps most importantly, tap into young people's endless ideas and enthusiasm for solving problems.

We know that the real benefits of service learning go far beyond the events of a week, or even a year. They last a lifetime, because countless students who participate in service learning continue to serve throughout their lives.

As my brother Robert Kennedy said, each time persons stand up for an